EXHIBIT 4

Sounding Out Pop

Analytical Essays in Popular Music

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Contents

FOUR ❧ Marvin Gaye as Vocal Composer

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IN JANUARY 1981, Marvin Gaye's method of making music was at the center of a heated debate that led to his break from the famous Motown Record Corporation.[1] It had been more than two years since the release of Gaye's last Motown album, *Here, My Dear* (1978), and the gaps between his highly anticipated releases had grown larger throughout the 1970s. Thus, without Gaye's permission, Motown finalized and released the album *In Our Lifetime* after procuring the master tapes from a recording engineer who had worked on the project.[2] Gaye was not only furious that Motown had not waited for his approval but also upset about the way in which the album was mixed and the addition of new instrumental parts. His major complaint was the inclusion of the song "Far Cry." Years later Gaye recalled his feelings to biographer David Ritz:

> I hadn't completed it. . . . The song was in its most primitive stage. All I had was this jive vocal track, and they put it out as a finished fact. How could they embarrass me like that? I was humiliated. They also added guitar licks and bass lines. How dare they second guess my artistic decisions! Can you imagine saying to an artist, say Picasso, "Okay Pablo, you've been fooling with this picture long enough. We'll take your unfinished canvas and add a leg here, an arm there. You might be the artist, but you're behind schedule, so we'll finish up this painting for you. If you don't like the results, Pablo, baby, that's tough!"[3]

Gaye's reference to Picasso is telling, for it reveals that he viewed his process of making music as nonlinear. There are several aspects of the released version of "Far Cry" that illustrate his working method (an abbreviated transcription is provided in example 4.1).[4] Most noticeably, the tentatively enunciated words throughout the track show how Gaye developed lyrical content. These words were most likely improvised while singing through the chord changes over an already completed backing track.[5] Consequently, the melody does not have a structural hierarchy
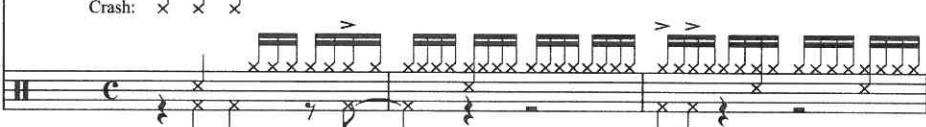
Example 4.1. Marvin Gaye, "Far Cry"

and there are no established formal sections such as a verse, chorus, or refrain. The rhythm of the melody, while potentially interesting for its consistent syncopation, is also mostly invariable. The tone collection in the vocal line and the manner in which these pitches are used are also extremely limited. For the most part, the tune simply alternates between two short motives that incorporate scale degrees 7 and 1 and scale degrees 4 and 3. Finall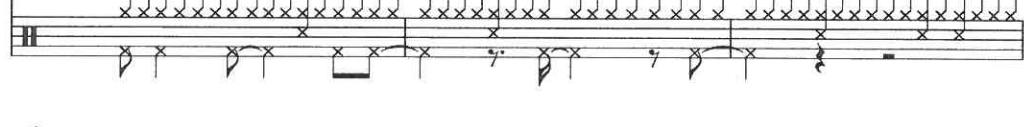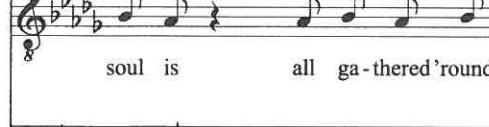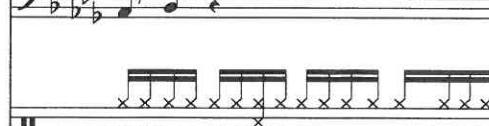y, it is clear that the formal structure of this song was partially determined through postproduction editing, most likely without Gaye's approval. By cutting much of the original improvised track and inserting a spliced copy of the first minute and a half of the song after the bridge as a "return" to the opening material, the form of the piece was altered after Gaye recorded his vocals.[6] In comparison with Gaye's contemporaneous work, "Far Cry" was, in fact, very primitive.

Throughout this essay I will use the term *vocal composition* to refer to Gaye's process of documented improvisation as songwriting.[7] This term acknowledges Gaye's ability to blur the lines between performing, recording, and composing. Although he was certainly not the first artist to use the recording studio in this fashion, this method of crafting a song was vital to his creative process and is therefore fundamental to a basic understanding of his work. My exploration of Gaye's work as a vocal composer begins with an account of his career at Motown in Detroit during the 1960s, exploring first his background as a singer, then documenting an important early example of his compositional process. Following a discussion of some critical approaches to vocal composition, the final section of the essay includes historical and analytical readings of three songs that clearly illustrate Gaye's vocal composition during the 1970s.

While the rhythm and blues (R & B) tradition has a formidable history of appropriating technology to capture unrepeatable performances, establish and shift power structures, and liberate nontraditional composers, Gaye was a product of Motown, a company whose streamlined creative process is often regarded as the antithesis of individualist creativity.[8] Gaye's association with Motown was deep seeded, encompassing both his creative and professional lives. Thus, the impact of Motown on all facets of Gaye's life was at the core of his vocal composition process.

Motown's operations were housed in several converted homes on Detroit's West Grand Boulevard, where founder Berry Gordy presided over a micromanaged system of creating art that functioned as a musical "assembly line."[9] Gordy and Motown controlled all aspects of a performer's career, administering or owning everything from management, ward-

robe, and etiquette to publishing, songwriting, and musical production. Using dedicated songwriters, producers, studio musicians, arrangers, studio engineers, professional development specialists, and a quality-control board, this process helped to produce the majority of Motown's well-known hits between 1959 and 1972 and has famously been compared to the assembly line processes used in Detroit's many automobile plants.[10]

As one of Motown's biggest stars, during the 1960s Gaye found it difficult to assert any sort of creative control, and for nearly a decade he worked mostly as a singer. He first wanted to be a romantic balladeer in the tradition of Nat King Cole and Frank Sinatra. After this proved unpopular, he turned to upbeat rhythm and blues, singing on nearly thirty hit songs during the first seven years of his career from 1961 to 1968.[11] In addition to his solo recordings, Gaye perfected the role of the romantic male in duets with Mary Wells, Kim Weston, Tammi Terrell, and later Diana Ross, collaborations that resulted in nearly twenty songs that charted in *Billboard*. Simply put, Gaye thrived at Motown; he was the company's most popular male soloist and duet partner throughout the majority of the 1960s and was arguably at the center of Motown's creative output throughout the decade.

In addition to his vocal duties Gaye also experimented with behind-the-scenes roles at the company. He performed as a drummer in the early 1960s after arriving in Detroit as a member of the new Moonglows and later worked as a writer and producer (often for his own recordings).[12] Between July 1962 and August 1967, he received credit for writing or cowriting seven charting singles and many more album tracks and B-sides released by Motown (see appendixes 1 and 2).[13] This activity foreshadowed Gaye's involvement in the creative process during the 1970s.

The trajectory of Gaye's career changed dramatically in the fall of 1968, when disc jockeys helped to popularize his album track "I Heard It Through the Grapevine," which had been produced by Norman Whitfield almost a year earlier and promptly rejected for release as a single by Berry Gordy.[14] "Grapevine" was released as a single in November 1968, becoming the first Gaye song to top the pop chart and the best-selling disc in Motown's decade-long history.

Although Gaye was at his artistic peak as a vocalist, in the wake of "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" he did not perform live for several years, becoming increasingly involved in production.[15] The producer was arguably the most powerful role in the Motown assembly line, and—in keeping with the philosophy of dividing the creative process among vari-

ous specialists—most performers were not given access to this level of creative control.[16] During the late summer of 1968, Gaye enlisted the help of a lesser-known Motown producer, Richard Morris, and arranged a recording session to produce a song called "The Bells," which he had cowritten with his wife Anna (the sister of Motown president Berry Gordy).[17]

The yearlong production effort that followed clearly exhibited Gaye's emerging method of vocal composition. In June and August 1968, Gaye and Morris coproduced two preliminary versions of "The Bells" for the vocal group Bobby Taylor and the Vancouvers.[18] One by one, Motown Quality Control rejected both of these recordings.[19] Without re-recording any instrumental parts, Gaye continued to work on the project by rewriting the lyrics and melody.[20] With a new set of lyrics, the track was transformed from "The Bells" into "Baby, I'm For Real," with re-recorded vocal parts by the Originals. In August 1969, "Baby, I'm For Real" was released by Motown as a single and reached the number one position on the *Billboard* "Best Selling Soul Singles" chart.[21]

Because "The Bells" and "Baby, I'm For Real" use exactly the same musical background, the differences between their vocal parts help to illustrate how vocal composition was used to write two original songs from the same backing track (see example 4.2).[22] The melody of the verse in "Baby, I'm for Real" resides on an axis that lies consistently a third below that of the verse of "The Bells." Additionally, the vocal rhythms of these

Example 4.2. Bobby Taylor and the Vancouvers, "The Bells" (1968), and the Originals, "Baby, I'm For Real"

two verse sections emphasize different parts of the measure: "The Bells" contains heavy activity on the downbeats, while "Baby, I'm For Real" stresses the off beats. This contrary rhythmic emphasis is so stark that, when superimposed, the two verse melodies nearly fit together in a perfect call-and-response pattern. Finally, using a series of eighth-note quartuplets, one of which even occurs over the bar line, "Baby, I'm For Real" also illustrates the rhythmic fluidity that occurs frequently in Gaye's works created through vocal composition.[23] In its time, the success of "Baby I'm For Real" from within Motown's merit-based assembly line system gave credence to Gaye's creative methods as a producer and set the stage for his move toward extended vocal composition techniques. Although the 1968 version of "The Bells" was not released for another thirty-five years, we may now view this piece as a harbinger of Gaye's creative methods in the 1970s.

Gaye's use of vocal composition ventured even farther outside of the Motown norm as he gained greater control of his productions during the late 1960s. Beginning with the 1971 album *What's Going On*, Gaye started to produce his own recordings, which allowed him to compose important elements of the music during a session, perform his original compositions directly to tape, and continually edit and refine his work through the process of "punching in" and overdubbing. Although he still relied heavily on the assembly line to create his music, he often used his vocal performances to inspire new material.

During this period Gaye also started to create dense vocal composites by combining multiple recordings of his own voice. Throughout the majority of *What's Going On*, for example, there are two simultaneous Gaye vocal tracks that assume the lead, performing at times in unison, heterophony, parallel motion, and call-and-response. The two existing "final mixes" of this album—one completed in Detroit and the other in Los Angeles—approach the spatial placement of these voices in the stereo field much differently, arguably offering different perspectives on the musical material.[24]

These contrasting versions of *What's Going On* are a reminder of the growing importance of the vocal element in Gaye's music of the 1970s. By developing material directly to tape in the studio, Gaye captured tapestries of unrepeatable utterances in fixed form for posterity and superimposed the acts of composition and documentation in a manner that shifted the power structure of his creativity. This methodology allowed Gaye, who had an otherwise limited ability to create a song in a standard compositional setting, to play a much greater role in the com-

positional process. He sang duets with himself, re-created doo-wop textures by singing every part, highlighted the contrast between the different timbres and ranges of his voice, and included spoken word elements. In fact, after *What's Going On* Gaye rarely used a solo voice to represent the sung portion of his music.

There is a growing body of musicological work that acknowledges the act of recording as akin to the practice of composing. Scholars as diverse as Albin Zak, Mark Katz, Walter Everett, and Joseph Schloss have explored the commonalities of, and inherent differences between, composing directly to tape (or disc) and traditional written composition.[25] For example, Zak reminds us that through recording a composer (or what Zak calls a "recordist") has the ability to dictate elements that are difficult to notate such as spatial arrangement and timbral manipulation. Zak also recognizes that by composing directly to tape "the syntax and structural shape of songs and arrangements are absorbed in their material form, that is, in their utterance and its sonic presentation as it appears in our loudspeakers and headphones."[26]

It is also important to consider how African-American vernacular performance practice may have informed Gaye's methodology. In *The Power of Black Music,* Samuel Floyd writes, "Aesthetic deliberation about African-American music requires a perceptual and conceptual shift from the idea of music as an object to music as an event, from music as written—as a frozen, sonic ideal—to music as making."[27] Thus, in vocal composition, we witness a process of composition and "notation" that has the capacity to reveal and incorporate ultraspecific performative details as well as a vocal performance tradition that occurs while recording, resulting in a marriage between Zak's acknowledgment of the permanence of composing in the recording studio and Floyd's "music as making."

Although Gaye was experimenting with greater creative independence during this time, it is still important to remember that vocal composition often required a delicate balance between the ideas of many other collaborative authors. The ways in which Gaye's originality was supported through collaboration is quite complex but nevertheless important to consider when analyzing his work from the 1970s. For example, in a study of *What's Going On,* Travis Jackson investigates the complicated process of collaborative authorship, offering many important ideas for consideration.[28] Drawing from the ideas of Howard Becker, Nicholas Cook, and Zak, Jackson's work gives credit to the behind-the-scenes musicians who made significant contributions to Gaye's creative process. He

specifically cites the work of arranger David van de Pitte, songwriter (and member of the Four Tops) Renaldo "Obie" Benson, bassist James Jamerson, and the "47 other instrumentalists and vocalists who participated in the recording of the [*What's Going On*] L.P." Jackson's overall argument—that we need to acknowledge the creative personnel who were "standing in the shadows"—is important and rapidly gaining popularity in the mainstream media.[29] Gaye's collaborative pattern is clear, and Jackson's study could certainly be expanded to include each Gaye album of the 1970s by identifying the importance of collaboration in nearly every project after *What's Going On*.[30] To clarify, I do not seek to discredit the collaborative efforts of others at Motown. Instead, I wish to focus on Gaye's often cited but rarely defined role in the creation of his music.[31]

From Gaye's extensive 1970s catalog, I have chosen to discuss three groups of songs that reflect various elements of his vocal composition. The issues discussed earlier—including Gaye's personal and professional relationships with Motown, his collaborative process, and the act of simultaneous recording and performance—will pervade the analyses of these pieces. In the first example, the interpretive potential of vocal composition is evident in a comparison of two recorded versions of the Frank Loesser standard "I Wish I Didn't Love You So." In contrast to Gaye's highly sexualized image during the 1970s, this example demonstrates his obsession with a more conservative style of vocal music that was in concert with Motown's uplift ideology of the previous decade. A second example discusses Gaye's alteration of the song "Let's Get It On." The process of creating this song demonstrates how political and personal concerns were often infused into Gaye's music, and how he used vocal composition to collaborate with producer Ed Townsend. Finally, Gaye's method of utilizing the technological advancements of the recording studio to create contrasting vocal composites will be explored in the last example, which considers two songs from Gaye's 1978 album *Here, My Dear.*

In viewing Gaye's process through these three types of creative activity (interpretation, collaboration, and utilization), this study is presented in a nonteleological manner. What follows are three snapshots of Gaye's process seen equally from the analytical and contextual levels. Taken as a group, these examples form a complex picture of a process of creating music that encapsulates the many political, artistic, and personal aspects of Gaye's music during the 1970s.

Although Gaye's attempts to record standards during the early 1960s were all financially unsuccessful, he remained optimistic about working

with this style throughout his career, often pushing Motown to let him pursue what he called "ballads."[32] His public interest in standards waned after an unsuccessful set of performances at New York's Copacabana in August 1966 and a failed attempt to begin recording a new studio album several months later.[33] He did not release standards after this but continued to rehearse and record cabaret music through the end of the 1970s. Gaye's personal interest in romantic balladry during this decade led to many inventive recordings that specifically highlight the interpretive range of vocal composition.

Gaye was largely preoccupied with one particular group of ballads during the 1970s, a group of arrangements created years before by multi-instrumentalist and composer Bobby Scott.[34] Gaye first worked with these pieces in January 1967, several months after the run at the Copacabana, when backing tracks and vocals were recorded for all six of Scott's arrangements. In the end, however, both Gaye and Motown considered these vocals unusable. Although it was increasingly evident that the odds were against Gaye becoming the "black Sinatra," he continued to study the unfinished Scott arrangements for more than a decade, amassing a variety of radically different interpretations of each song in this set.[35] During downtime of sessions for his more popular music (or sometimes as a means of procrastination), Gaye would experiment with the vocal elements of the Scott recordings, adding layers, changing melodies, and interpreting and reinterpreting the material.[36] The varying vocal performances for the Frank Loesser song "I Wish I Didn't Love You So," for example, are notable for their wide range of interpretation. Motown has subsequently released three different versions of this song—all of which were probably recorded during the late 1970s—two on a 1997 album entitled *Vulnerable* and one on the 1990 *Marvin Gaye Collection* boxed set.[37]

The original Loesser melody and changes for "I Wish I Didn't Love You So" are shown in example 4.3.[38] In his arrangement, Scott used only a single appearance of the thirty-two-bar refrain of Loesser's tune—in a swung compound meter rather than cut time—framed by a four-measure prelude and a three-measure postlude that fades out in both versions.[39] Scott followed Loesser's basic harmonic scheme with some alterations in the first four bars of the verse, where the original changes are replaced by an oscillating I–ii progression over a tonic pedal in the bass. In the second half of each A section, Scott's arrangement briefly tonicizes the IV and iii chords, respectively, via local secondary dominants, then moves through a diatonic circle-of-fifths progression (starting at iii), essentially preserving Loesser's original harmonic scheme.

Example 4.3. Frank Loesser's "I Wish I Didn't Love You So," mm. 1–8 (changes and melody)

Gaye recorded three different voices over this backing arrangement, which comprise two interpretive "strains" (see example 4.4). The first (strain 1) is a vocal duet using Loesser's text whose melody, rhythm, and phrasing are traceable to Loesser's tune. For example, the parallel descending contour of the vocal duet matches the original melody, which descends an octave from tonic to tonic in the first eight measures. Gaye similarly derived and altered Loesser's rhythms in this strain, using extended note values for the words "I" and "so" and eighth notes to accompany the words "didn't love you so" in a declamatory fashion. There are also some significant alterations to Loesser's original tune in these performances. Most important, the two melodic strands of the Gaye duet emphasize different scale degrees and encompass a significantly smaller range than the original melody. In the key of D-flat major, Gaye begins on scale degrees 3 and 7 (the pitches F and C) and descends downward only two notches in the thirdwise vertical space of the tonic seventh chord, cadencing on scale degrees 7 and 3 (C and F), respectively.[40] So, while the linear descent in the duet is clearly derived from the original melody, a much smaller intervallic space exists in the individual voices.[41]

The second strain (strain 2) is a solo vocal performance that preserves virtually none of the melodic, textual, or rhythmic elements from the original. There is a completely new set of words throughout this strain. Gaye also adopts a single rhythmic motive for the first sixteen

Example 4.4. Two of Marvin Gaye's interpretations of "I Wish I Didn't Love You So" (four-bar prelude and eight-bar A phrase)

measures of the arrangement (comprising the prelude and first A section), most likely a result of improvising in the studio. This repeated figure consists of three eighth notes followed by a syncopated accent on the eighth note that precedes each strong beat (1 and 3). Even as the arrangement continues past six sets of oscillating I–ii chords (in the prelude and beginning of the verse) into the section of greater harmonic motion that contains the circle-of-fifths progression, Gaye's new melody remains focused on this four-syllable motive.

In terms of interpretive distance, it is crucial to remember that these standards were recorded at a time when audiences knew Gaye best for his pioneering "hyper-sexualized soul" (discussed later in connection with "Let's Get It On"). Gerald Early provides an interesting perspective on the phenomenon of the singer's continuing interest in light, vocal styles.

> It is one of the peculiar and penetrating gestures of "crossover" in American culture that in the 1960s, Marvin Gaye could fantasize about being an Italian ballad singer, making four ballads-and-standards albums for Motown between 1961 and 1965, while the Italian singers of the Rascals could fantasize about being black soul singers with such songs for Atlantic as "Good Lovin'" (1966) and "Groovin'" (1967).[42]

Gaye's continuing interest in the Scott arrangements betrays how this "fantasy" of being a ballad singer persisted well beyond the 1960s. Accordingly, "I Wish I Didn't Love You So" and the rest of the Scott ballads became Gaye's only connection to this failed aspect of his career. He once claimed that it was his maturity and life experiences that finally made it possible for him to interpret these songs to his liking, but it is also relevant that his fully developed vocal composition process facilitated his work with these pieces.

Although Gaye recorded many interpretations of the Scott ballads and did not preside over the mixing of any of this music, it is unclear which of his many performances of "I Wish I Didn't Love You So" he would have included in a final mix.[43] The three commercially available versions of the song complicate this issue even further because each includes a different combination of these vocal tracks. The two versions included on *Vulnerable* keep the vocal strains distinct from one another, with the first version using strain 1 and the second (called an alternative

vocal performance) using strain 2, while a third version, released on the 1990 *Marvin Gaye Collection* boxed set, mixes the two strains together, superimposing the higher voice of strain 1 over that of strain 2. Through the lens of vocal composition, it is clear that these vocal performances simply represent a sketch pad of ideas for the track, not a finished or completed work. Therefore, just like "Far Cry," "I Wish I Didn't Love You So" cannot be considered compete. (As far as commercial releases are concerned, it may be most revealing simply to include all three of these vocal tracks to help the listener understand the process that these unfinished performances inhabited.) Nevertheless, for the purposes of this study, "I Wish I Didn't Love You So" offers a clear instance of the interpretive potential of Gaye's compositional technique.

While Gaye was secretly rehearsing cabaret music in the recording studio, his most popular music was far more corporeal. Perhaps the most famous example of this was the song "Let's Get It On." The first sessions for "Let's Get It On" occurred in California during the spring of 1973, after Motown had settled on the West Coast.[44] On 13 March, producer and songwriter Ed Townsend ran a session to record the backing track for this song, which at the time had only a tentative melody and lyrics that Townsend had written himself.[45] A demonstration recording was also made on 13 March, which allows us to hear the state of the song when Gaye entered the creative process. The final lead vocal take was recorded nine days later, on 22 March, and Gaye completed his vocal element on 4 April when he added a set of layered background vocals. A comparison of the demonstration vocals and final lead vocals illustrates the extent to which Gaye acted as a vocal composer after the song's conception.

The harmonic content of the background instrumentation consists mostly of a churning four-chord progression in E-flat major (I–iii–IV–V). This cycle is repeated throughout the majority of the backing track, underlying what would become the verse and chorus sections.[46] The flexibility of using a repeated progression for the bulk of the harmonic material enabled Gaye to improvise on the basic lyrics and melodic ideas presented by Townsend and eventually piece together a concrete melody and lyric. As example 4.5 shows, there are notable differences between Gaye's demonstration and final vocals. The first important change involves the song's phrase design. In the demo version, Gaye enters with the catchphrase "let's get it on" after three harmonic cycles, creating an asymmetrical 6 + 10 hypermetric design. This irregular hypermeter is

Example 4.5. Marvin Gaye, "Let's Get It On" (demo) and "Let's Get It On" (final)

Example 4.5. (continued)

"corrected" in the final vocals, which feature an 8 + 8 structure for the first verse and subsequent chorus. The change in phrase design is easy to explain, as both the chorus and the verse are based on four repetitions of the basic two-measure harmonic progression. In the demo version, Gaye simply shifted the entrance of the chorus one cycle earlier, but he also compensated for this by extending the chorus to span five repetitions of the two-bar unit, maintaining a square sixteen-bar pattern for the verse and chorus combined.

There is a second set of differences between the two versions in the melodic ranges of these two performances during the verse. In the demo version, Gaye tends to work mainly between the pitches $C4$ and $G4$, with the upper note G (and the blue $G\flat$, $\flat\hat{3}$) serving as a kind of "goal tone" for many of the subphrases. On the contrary, the pitch content of the finished vocals resides mostly a third above the demo version, exploring the range between $E\flat4$ and $B\flat4$, with the upper note $B\flat$ likewise serving as the goal tone of subphrases. A good example with which to illustrate these differences occurs at the opening of the song when Gaye sings the phrase "I've been really trying baby" (and "I've been tryin'"). In the demo version Gaye's vocal line outlines what is essentially a C minor triad over the $E\flat$–Gm progression that begins the song. In the same section of the finished version, however, Gaye sings a stepwise melody that begins on G, climbs to $B\flat$ and then vacillates between $G\flat$ and F for nearly two full beats over the subdominant chord (giving particular emphasis to the blue note $G\flat$) in anticipation of the movement to V, where, after moving through the lower neighbor $E\flat$, the melody eventually rests on F (the structural fifth of the chord).

A third and final difference has to do with the text, and offers a clear instance of the editorial latitude that existed between Gaye and Ed Townsend.[47] Townsend wrote the song after completing rehabilitation for alcoholism, and his original lyrics, which occur in the demo vocals, use the phrase "let's get it on" to refer to "moving on" with life after a struggle with the bottle. Accordingly, the lyrics of the verse—directed back at the protagonist—speak of peace, love, understanding, and brotherhood while the chorus refers to the collective "we." Gaye altered the perspective of the song for the finished version, situating the catch-phrase as a pickup line of a libidinous fantasy, and including in the lyrics another person, the potential partner. More important, this alteration is accompanied by a vast amount of sexual energy, infusing the vocal performance with a new series of grunts, groans, and growls that are conspicuously absent in the demo version.[48]

Michael Eric Dyson argues that this movement toward "hyper-sexualized soul" was a rebellion against the singer's strict religious upbringing:

> In his erotic exultation, Gaye struck a symbolic blow against sexual prisons built on narrow religious belief. As the son of a strict Pentecostal preacher, Marvin had plenty of cells to unlock. . . . His sensual strivings took on political meaning because they decried the spiritual claustrophobia that smothered erotic freedom.[49]

During the making of *Let's Get It On,* Gaye's sexual exploration was far more than musical. At the recording studio, he was especially attracted to a young woman named Janis Hunter, who was the daughter of one of Ed Townsend's guests, and after the 22 March session Gaye began an intense physical relationship with Hunter, who was then only sixteen years old. Gaye summarized the conflict that arose:

> I was a thirty-three-year-old man married to a fifty-year-old woman. Wasn't that something? My wife was seventeen years older than I was and this girl was seventeen years younger. I was worried about how everyone would react—my friends, my family, my fans.[50]

Thus, the aural exploration of sexuality in "Let's Get It On" mirrored an intense period of both turmoil and excitement in Gaye's personal life. In contrast to the cabaret music and middle of the road R & B Gaye recorded during the 1960s, "Let's Get It On" reflected a much deeper, and more accurate, portrait of life as a celebrity singer. By looking closely at these two different recordings through the lens of vocal composition, we are able to actually see and hear the process through which Gaye "sexualized" his music.

The two songs that form the focus of the final part of this study, "Here, My Dear" and "Everybody Needs Love," come from Marvin Gaye's last official studio album for Motown, *Here, My Dear,* which was released in December 1978.[51] Gaye's relationship with Motown was far from favorable at the time, and he created this album in an unusually autonomous setting. Gaye wrote eleven of the tracks on the album, recorded it in his own studio in Los Angeles, and produced the sessions.[52] Using these pieces, it is possible to show how Gaye created two discrete works with contrasting lyrics, melodic characters, and vocal composites over a single backing track.[53]

It is critical to understand the context surrounding the production of these songs before analyzing them in greater depth since their subject matter—the theme of the larger *Here, My Dear* album—governs their musical similarities and differences.[54] Although Marvin and Anna Gaye had been separated since the 1973 completion of *Let's Get It On,* the two did not officially divorce until March 1977. In the interim, Marvin Gaye and Janis Hunter had parented two children, which caused the tension of the divorce proceedings to rise considerably. Marvin's lack of financial prudence, combined with an extremely expensive drug habit, left the singer without acceptable funds with which to settle the divorce. The two parties made an unorthodox arrangement: Marvin would provide a cash payment for about half of the settlement of six hundred thousand dollars, and Anna would receive the remainder from his next record advance. In essence, Gaye would make an album to settle the financial terms of his divorce.[55]

The resulting album, *Here, My Dear,* is a magnum opus on the trials and tribulations of a failing marriage. Gaye would later discuss his thought process concerning the album:

> I figured I'd just do a quickie record—nothing heavy, nothing even good. Why should I break my neck when Anna was going to wind up with the money anyway? But the more I lived with the notion, the more it fascinated me. Besides, I owed the public my best effort. Finally, I did the record out of deep passion. It became an obsession. I had to free myself from Anna, and I saw this as the way. All those depositions and hearings, all those accusations and lies—I knew I'd explode if I didn't get all of that junk out of me. So I had [studio engineer] Art [Stewart] open up the mikes and I just sang and sang until I'd drained myself of everything I'd lived through.[56]

It was in this setting that Gaye created the songs "Here, My Dear" and "Everybody Needs Love," tracks whose multitude of vocal performances offer examples of Gaye's emotional investment in the *Here, My Dear* project (see example 4.6).[57] One clear example of this conflict lies in the texts of these songs, which are at odds. Although they deal with the same subject matter, Gaye's discussion of the divorce is approached from two very different perspectives, which show the range of emotions experienced during his trying separation. The text of "Here, My Dear," the album's opening track, reveals immediately that the album will be entirely

about the singer's divorce in a tongue-in-cheek fashion, remarking "this is what you wanted, here, my dear, here it is." The contrasting text of "Everybody Needs Love" recalls how love benefits everybody and everything; Gaye claims that his mother and father "need love" and he "needs love, too." He continues with the revelation that the object of the song, the "you" (presumably Anna), also needs love. Finally, in a remarkable turn he claims that he needs *her* love. In other words, Gaye asks for a most unlikely source of comfort and compassion: the support of his former wife.

The music of these songs reflects these different perspectives. In the second verse of "Here, My Dear," Gaye speaks of the past, projecting memories of discontent using a lazy, inward vocal style that centers on $\hat{2}$ (F) for four utterances, only moving to $\flat\hat{3}$ (G$\flat$) and $\hat{5}$ (B$\flat$) as the harmony progresses to the V chord at the end of the phrase. In the corresponding section from the second verse of "Everybody Needs Love," he includes a wide range of vocal expression, using three tracks of his voice. One of these voices sings the texted lead, a second performs the role of the functional bass for the first four measures of the example (altering the harmony to a root position I–iii–ii–V progression), and the third maintains a constant repeating pattern of scale degrees 5–6–5.[58] In contrast to the lethargic vocal melody of "Here, My Dear," the swelling tension of the vocals in "Everybody Needs Love" reaches a peak at the poignant moment when Gaye confesses that his father, the man who would eventually take Gaye's life, "needs love."[59] This marks one of the most harmonically active points in the song, when, over a G half-diminished chord in third inversion (analyzed in example 4.6 as part of an expanded V^9 of IV), the melody lands on a dissonant nonchord tone (C) and jumps up an octave before resolving downward.

Gaye's vocal composites help to achieve a difference of affect in these two songs, providing a fascinating case study in aural representation. Nearly every song on *Here, My Dear* contains a thickly textured vocal composite, often to a staggering effect. It is clear that Gaye performed historical roles through these vocal arrangements, re-creating aural memories of the past to cleanse himself of the difficult reality of the present. The doo-wop groups of the 1950s, the gospel choirs and shouting preachers of his religious youth, the seductive spoken rap of his hypersexualized soul, and his many sung solo voices across the timbral spectrum all combine to create this historicizing effect.[60] Gaye was at his artistic peak during this tumultuous time of his life, creating dense vocal

Example 4.6. Marvin Gaye, "Here My Dear" and "Everybody Needs Love"

Example 4.6. (continued)

compositions that highlighted the wide range of his vocal capabilities and allowed him to mix myriad types of singing on one album.

It is important to clarify that Gaye's *process* is not necessarily unique. When I asked him about Gaye's technique, David Ritz, who has written collaborative biographies (and composed) with many important rhythm and blues artists, acknowledged that it was representative of a common methodology in rhythm and blues and "beat-based" music:

> In R & B, [as] far as I've seen, the melody-lyric is usually done after the basic tracks. Even today, hip-hop producers make tracks and give [th]em to vocalists for melodies/words. That's how Janet Jackson works w[ith] [Jimmy] Jam and [Terry] Lewis. [That's] certainly how Barry White and Isaac Hayes worked. . . . I genuinely don't think MPG [Marvin Pentz Gaye] was that different. His vocals, of course, were astoundingly inventive and daring, but his methodology pretty much standard.[61]

In other words, this methodology—whether we call it vocal composition or something entirely different—is clearly at the backbone of the processes used to create an enormous amount of modern popular music.

Even though Gaye's use of technology wasn't novel, his use of vocal composition is still very revealing. Gaye's life experiences during the 1970s often imbued his musical content, and the context of his personal and professional relationships help to paint a full picture of his method of vocal composition. Close readings of vocal composition provide a fresh perspective on how and why Gaye's vocals were "astoundingly inventive." Through analysis that offers evidence of Gaye's input into the creative process, it is clear that the freedom offered by the modern recording studio enabled this all-star vocalist to compose some of the most enduring works of his time.

Gaye was primarily a vocal composer during the last decade of his career—from *What's Going On* in 1971 until his death in 1984—and it is virtually impossible to analyze these works in any detail without taking this process into account. While the release of "Far Cry" may have been an embarrassment to Gaye, it ultimately opened an invaluable window into the creative world of this seminal rhythm and blues artist. It is, of course, ironic that an unfinished, unflattering song in part provides the key to understanding the depth of the late work of Gaye and his methods of musical creation.

APPENDIX 1

Motown Single A-Sides Written or Cowritten by Marvin Gaye, 1962–70

Song	Chart	Artist	Author	Release Date
Beachwood 4-5789	17p, 7r	Marvelettes	William Stevenson Berry Gordy Marvin Gaye	7/11/62
Stubborn Kind of Fellow	46p, 8r	Marvin Gaye	Marvin Gaye William Stevenson George Gordy	7/23/62
Hitch Hike	30p, 12r	Marvin Gaye	Marvin Gaye William Stevenson Clarence Paul	12/19/62
Pride and Joy	10p, 2r	Marvin Gaye	Norman Whitfield Marvin Gaye William Stevenson	4/18/63
Dancing in the Street	2p, 2r	Martha and The Vandellas	William Stevenson Marvin Gaye Ivy Joe Hunter	7/31/64
Pretty Little Baby	25p, 16r	Marvin Gaye	Marvin Gaye Clarence Paul Dave Hamilton	6/18/65
If This World Were Mine	68p, 27r	Marvin Gaye	Marvin Gaye Tammy Terrell	8/29/67
Baby, I'm for Real[a]	14p, 1r	The Originals	Anna Gordy Gaye Marvin Gaye	8/12/69
The Bells[b]	12p, 4r	The Originals	Anna Gordy Gaye Marvin Gaye Elgie Stover Iris Gordy	1/9/70
We Can Make It Baby[b]	74p, 20r	The Originals	Marvin Gaye James Nyx	7/7/70

Note: p = *Billboard* Hot 100 (7/7/62–12/27/70). r = *Billboard* Hot R & B Sides (7/7/62–10/28/62), *Billboard* Hot R & B Singles (11/3/62–11/23/63), *Cash Box* Top 50 in R & B Locations (11/30/63–1/23/65), *Billboard* Hot Rhythm and Blues Singles (1/30/65–5/29/65), *Billboard* Top Selling Rhythm and Blues Singles (6/5/65–4/2/66), *Billboard* Top Selling R & B Singles (4/9/66–1/6/68), *Billboard* Best Selling R & B Singles (1/13/68–3/30/68), Best Selling Rhythm and Blues Singles (4/6/68–8/16/69), Best Selling Soul Singles (8/23/69–12/27/70)
[a]Produced by Marvin Gaye and Richard Morris
[b]Produced by Marvin Gaye

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APPENDIX 2

Motown Album Tracks and B-Sides Cowritten by Marvin Gaye, 1962–69

Song	Original Artist	Author	Release Date
Whistling About You[a]	Harvey	Mel Kanar Marvin Gaye Harvey Fuqua	3/31/62
It's Now or Never[b]	Johnny Powers	Bob Kayli Marvin Gaye George Gordy Johnny Powers	12/90 recorded 4/62
I've Got a Story[b]	Mary Wells	Marvin Gaye William Stevenson Henry Cosby	9/93 recorded 6/62
It Hurt Me Too	Marvin Gaye	Marvin Gaye William Stevenson Ricardo Wallace	7/23/62
Get My Hands On Some Lovin'	Marvin Gaye	Marvin Gaye William Stevenson	1/31/63
My Two Arms – You = Tears	Mary Wells	Marvin Gaye William Stevenson Clarence Paul	1/31/63
Soul Bongo	Stevie Wonder	Clarence Paul Marvin Gaye	5/31/63
It's Got to Be Love[b]	Marvin Gaye	Marvin Gaye Clarence Paul	4/95 recorded 1/64
Need Your Lovin' (Want You Back)	Marvin Gaye	Marvin Gaye Clarence Paul	1/21/65
Stepping Closer to Your Heart	Marvin Gaye	Marvin Gaye Harvey Fuqua	1/21/65
Loving and Affection[b]	Marvin Gaye	Marvin Gaye Clarence Paul Cornelius Grant	3/86 recorded 8/63
Hey Diddle Diddle	Marvin Gaye	Harvey Fuqua Marvin Gaye Johnny Bristol	5/23/66
I Love You[c]	Chris Clark	Marvin Gaye Anna Gordy Gaye Margaret Johnson	2/23/67
Change What You Can	Marvin Gaye	Marvin Gaye Elgie Stover Harvey Fuqua	12/21/67
At Last (I Found a Love)	Marvin Gaye	Marvin Gaye Anna Gordy Gaye Elgie Stover	12/21/67
Court of the Common Plea[b]	Marvin Gaye	Marvin Gaye Anna Gordy Gaye Elgie Stover	6/94 recorded 8/68
I Can't Help but Love You	Marvin Gaye Tammi Terrell	Robert Gordy Thomas Kemp Marvin Gaye	8/26/68

Motown Album Tracks and B-Sides Cowritten by Marvin Gaye, 1962–69

Song	Original Artist	Author	Release Date
You're the One[d]	The Originals	Ivy Jo Hunter Elgie Stover	1/16/69
When You Are Available	Shorty Long	Marvin Gaye Anna Gordy Gaye Elgie Stover Shorty Long	8/28/69

[a]Released on the Tri-Phi label
[b]Not released contemporaneous to recording
[c]Produced by Marvin Gaye
[d]Produced by Marvin Gaye and Ivy Jo Hunter

DISCOGRAPHY

Recordings are listed in order of release. Sources include the liner notes to *Marvin Gaye: The Master, 1961–1984,* http://www.bsnpubs.com/motown/motown story.html, www.allmusic.com, www.dftmc.info, and www.hip-oselect.com. The abbreviation "b/w," commonly used in the 1960s, stands for "bundled with."

Clark, Chris. "I Want to Go Back There Again," b/w "I Love You" (V.I.P. 25041, February 1967).

Gaye, Marvin. *The Soulful Moods of Marvin Gaye* (Tamla TM-221, June 1961).

Gaye, Marvin. "Stubborn Kind of Fellow," b/w "It Hurt Me Too" (Tamla 54068, July 1962).

Gaye, Marvin. "Hitch Hike," b/w "Hello There Angel" (Tamla 54075, December 1962).

Gaye, Marvin. *That Stubborn Kind of Fellow* (Tamla TM-239, January 1963).

Gaye, Marvin. "Pride and Joy," b/w "One of These Days" (Tamla 54079, April 1963).

Gaye, Marvin. *When I'm Alone I Cry* (Tamla TM-251, April 1964).

Gaye, Marvin. *Hello Broadway* (Tamla TM-259, November 1964).

Gaye, Marvin. *How Sweet It Is to Be Loved By You* (Tamla TM-258, January 1965).

Gaye, Marvin. "Pretty Little Baby," b/w "Now That You've Won Me" (Tamla 54117, June 1965).

Gaye, Marvin. *A Tribute to the Great Nat King Cole* (Tamla TM-261, November 1965).

Gaye, Marvin. *Moods of Marvin Gaye* (Tamla TM-266, May 1966).

Gaye, Marvin. "Your Unchanging Love," b/w "I'll Take Care of You" (Tamla 54153, June 1967).

Gaye, Marvin. "You," b/w "At Last I Found Love" (Tamla 54160, December 1967).

Gaye, Marvin. "You," b/w "Change What You Can" (Tamla 54160, December 1967).

Gaye, Marvin. *In the Groove* (also issued as *I Heard It Through the Grapevine*) (Tamla TS-285, August 1968).

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Gaye, Marvin. "I Heard It Through the Grapevine," b/w "You're What's Happening (In the World Today) (Tamla 54176, November 1968).

Gaye, Marvin. "What's Going On," b/w "God Is Love" (Tamla 54201, January 1971).

Gaye, Marvin. *What's Going On* (Tamla TS-310, June 1971).

Gaye, Marvin. *Trouble Man* (Tamla TS-322L, December 1972).

Gaye, Marvin. "Let's Get It On," b/w "I Wish It Would Rain" (Tamla 54234, June 1973).

Gaye, Marvin. *Let's Get It On* (Tamla T-329V1, August 1973).

Gaye, Marvin. "Come Get to This," b/w "Distant Lover" (Tamla 54241, October 1973).

Gaye, Marvin. "You Sure Love to Ball," b/w "Just to Keep You Satisfied" (Tamla 54244, January 1974).

Gaye, Marvin. *I Want You* (Tamla T6-342S1, March 1976).

Gaye, Marvin. *Here, My Dear* (Tamla T-364LP2, December 1978).

Gaye, Marvin. "Ego Tripping Out," b/w "Ego Tripping Out (Instrumental)" (Tamla 54305, September 1979).

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Gaye, Marvin. *Midnight Love* (Columbia 38197, October 1982).

Gaye, Marvin. "Sexual Healing," b/w "Sexual Healing (Instrumental)" (Columbia 03302, October 1982).

Gaye, Marvin. *Romantically Yours* (Columbia 40208, 1985).

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Gaye, Marvin. *Love Starved Heart: Rare and Unreleased* (Motown 31453 0319 2, June 1994).

Gaye, Marvin. *The Master, 1961–1984* (Motown 31453 0492 2 April 1995).

Gaye, Marvin. *Vulnerable* (Motown 314530786-2, March 1997).

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Gaye, Marvin. *What's Going On (Deluxe Edition)* (Motown 440-013-304-2, February 2001).

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Gaye, Marvin. *Love Songs: Bedroom Ballads* (Motown B00005UNBG, January 2002).

Gaye, Marvin. *I Want You (Deluxe Edition)* (Motown B0000467-02, July 2003).

Gaye, Marvin. *Marvin Gaye at the Copa* (Hip-O Select/Motown B0003629-02 DG02, April 2005).

Gaye, Marvin. *In Our Lifetime (Expanded Love Man Edition)* (Hip-O Select/Motown B0008082-02, May 2007).

Gaye, Marvin. *Here, My Dear* (expanded edition) (Hip-O Select/Motown B0010315-02, December 2007).

Gaye, Marvin, and Tammi Terrell. "If I Could Build My Whole World Around You," b/w "If This World Were Mine" (Tamla 54161, November 1967).

Gaye, Marvin, and Tammi Terrell. *You're All I Need* (Tamla TS-284, August 1968).

Knight, Gladys, and the Pips. "I Heard It Through the Grapevine," b/w "It's Time to Go Now" (Soul 35039, September 1967).

Long, Shorty. "A Whiter Shade of Pale," b/w "When You Are Available" (Soul S 35064, August 1969).

Martha and the Vandellas. "Dancing in the Street," b/w "There He Is (At My Door)" (Gordy 7033, July 1964).

Marvelettes, the. "Beachwood 4-5789," b/w "Someday, Someway" (Tamla 54065, July 1962).

Originals. "Green Grows the Lilacs," b/w "You're the One" (Soul 35061, May 1969).

Originals. "Baby, I'm For Real," b/w "Moment of Truth" (Soul 35066, August 1969).

Originals. "The Bells," b/w "I'll Wait For You" (Soul 35069, January 1970).

Originals. "We Can Make It Baby," b/w "I Like Your Style" (Soul 35074, July 1970).

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Wonder, Stevie. *The Jazz Soul of Little Stevie Wonder* (Tamla TM-233, July 1963).

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Young Rascals. "Groovin'," b/w "Sueno" Atlantic 2401, May 1966).

NOTES

tions) were extensive and extremely helpful, and two anonymous readers provided insightful and useful comments and suggestions.

1. By the late 1970s Motown had lost faith in Gaye as a marketable performer as he fled from Los Angeles to Hawaii and then Belgium to avoid paying taxes and a divorce settlement. It is difficult to determine which party eventually took action and severed the business relationship. However, Gaye was vocal in the press concerning his feelings for Motown. In a 1981 interview with *Blues and Soul* magazine, for example, he said, "As far as I'm concerned [*In Our Lifetime*] is definitely my last album for Motown—even if Berry [Gordy] does not release me from my existing recording obligations and I am in fact, under obligation to record for the rest of my natural life for Berry. If he refuses to release me, then you'll never hear any more music from Marvin Gaye. . . . *I'll never record again!*' (emphasis in original). Bob Killbourn, "In Marvin's Lifetime . . . ," *Blues and Soul and Disco Music Review*, 2–15 June 1981, 12–13, 31.

2. In general, the best source for information about Gaye's departure from Motown is David Ritz, *Divided Soul: The Life of Marvin Gaye* (New York: Da Capo, 1991). Berry Gordy recalls his version of the story in his autobiography *To Be Loved: The Music, the Magic, the Memories of Motown* (New York: Warner, 1994), 373–77.

3. Quoted in Ritz, *Divided Soul,* 280–81.

4. Several of the examples in this chapter include transcriptions for an abbreviated group of instruments. Most important for my argument are the lead melody, lyrics, and chord changes (including the actual bass), which are always included. However, in other instances I found that it was important also to include a representation of the background vocals and the drum kit.

5. The lyrics provided in example 4.1 are only approximate because of the inexact pronunciation in Gaye's performance. Furthermore, the lyrics printed in the liner notes accompanying the 1994 compact disc version of *In Our Lifetime* reflect the difficult process of transcribing Gaye's mumbled performance in this song. Although there is a literal copy of the opening material used after the bridge, the printed lyrics have notable differences. (This has been corrected in the more recent Expanded Love Man edition.) "Far Cry" also lacks the layered backing vocals that were a hallmark of Gaye's sound in the 1970s (see my subsequent discussion).

6. The first cut is at 2:37, and the paste begins at 3:07. The extended version is available on the *In Our Lifetime (Expanded Love Man Edition).*

7. To be sure, this nonlinear process is at the foundation of many of the most important post–World War II genres of popular music that rely heavily on the studio environment. Electronic dance music (EDM), the rock music of U2, and mashups are only a few of the musical forms recently documented by music researchers that rely heavily on creative methods that allow the composer(s) to assemble actual recorded parts and compose in a simultaneous or alternating fashion. For EDM, see Mark J. Butler, *Unlocking the Groove: Rhythm, Meter, and Musical Design in Electronic Dance Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006). For U2, see Paul Harris, "U2's Creative Process: Sketching in Sound," PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2006. Scholars such as Mark Katz

and Wayne Marshall have presented widely on modern composition that uses extensive digital editing.

Among the many other studies of music and technology, some noteworthy works include Joseph Auner, "'Sing It for Me': Posthuman Ventriloquism in Recent Popular Music," *Journal of the Royal Music Association* 128 (2003): 98–122; Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Louise Meintjes, *Sound of Africa! Making Music Zulu in a South African Studio* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Timothy Warner, *Pop Music: Technology and Creativity—Trevor Horn and the Digital Revolution* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2003); and Albin Zak, *The Poetics of Rock: Cutting Tracks, Making Records* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

8. Scholarly research on Motown includes Gerald Early, *One Nation under a Groove* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Ben Edmonds, *What's Going On: Marvin Gaye and the Last Days of the Motown Sound* (Edinburgh: Mojo, 2001); Jon Fitzgerald, "Motown Crossover Hits, 1963–1966, and the Creative Process," *Popular Music* 14 (1995): 1–11; Jonathan Andrew Flory, "I Hear a Symphony: Making Music at Motown, 1959–1979," PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2006; Nelson George, *Where Did Our Love Go? The Rise and Fall of the Motown Sound* (New York: St. Martin's, 1985); Suzanne E. Smith, *Dancing in the Street: Motown and the Cultural Politics of Detroit* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); and Jacqueline Warwick, "I Got All My Sisters and Me: Girl Culture, Girl Identity, and Girl Group Music," PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2002.

9. Motown is both the name of the company and the name of the company's most popular label. (The bulk of Motown's most popular material of the 1960s and 1970s was released on four labels: Motown, Tamla, Gordy, and Soul.) Although these two entities share the same name, they should not be confused with one another.

10. Many other companies used "assembly line" methods to create popular music during the 1960s. The Brill Building, the entire Nashville-based country music industry, and many other R & B companies (including Vee-Jay, Stax, Chess, and King) all similarly used large creative teams with dedicated functions to create music in an assembly line fashion at this time. Motown's assembly line, however, is arguably the most famous. Although more frequently cited in the popular press, academic treatments of this process at Motown include Fitzgerald, "Motown Crossover Hits"; Ian Inglis, "Some Kind of Wonderful: The Creative Legacy of the Brill Building," *American Music* 21 (2003): 214–35; and Smith, *Dancing in the Street*, 94–138. For a more thorough treatment of the popular music recording process outside of Motown, see Zak, *The Poetics of Rock*.

11. In the nineteen years between his first single to hit the charts, "Stubborn Kind of Fellow" (1962), and "Heavy Love Affair" (1981), his last Motown single, Gaye placed nearly sixty songs on the pop and R & B charts (this includes duets and one group release), more than any other Motown artist during these two decades. Twelve of these singles reached number 1 on the R & B charts, and three crossed over to number 1 on the pop charts.

There has been considerable controversy surrounding the use of record

chart data as a marker of popularity because it is unclear exactly how magazines such as *Cashbox* and *Billboard* derived the information included in their charts. In the case of Motown, however, it is clear that chart position was an acknowledged benchmark for a song and thus affected decision making at the company. For a more detailed discussion of the use of charts in research and the temporary discontinuation of the *Billboard* rhythm and blues chart in 1964, see David Brackett, "What a Difference a Name Makes: Two Instances of African-American Popular Music," in *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction,* ed. Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton (New York: Routledge, 2003), 238–50.

12. Ritz, *Divided Soul,* 63. A common anecdote cites Gaye as the drummer on the Marvelettes' "Please Mr. Postman," which became the first number 1 pop hit for Motown in late 1961. According to Motown archivist Harry Weinger, however, there is no documented instance of Gaye having performed as drummer on a Motown record (e-mail correspondence with the author, 4 January 2008). This is because there is little available documentation of the performers on *any* Motown backing session from the 1960s.

13. The songs included in the appendixes represent the released recordings of Gaye-penned songs. In fact, Gaye is credited with writing many more songs in the printed Jobete Catalog dated January 1959 to 31 March 1967. Furthermore, songwriting credit is not always a true marker of actual writing. Frequent deals were made between the people who had actually written the songs and those who had sufficient influence at Motown to get them recorded and released. Crucial to a later argument of this chapter, producers (and influential artists such as Gaye) could receive songwriting credit for simple editorial suggestions or changes made during a recording session.

14. Producer and cowriter Norman Whitfield made several recordings of "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" before the Marvin Gaye version became so popular. The first version of the song, produced by Whitfield in 1966, was performed by Smokey Robinson and the Miracles and not released to the public until 1998. This version is available commercially on the collection *Motown Sings Motown Treasures.* Gaye performed on the next recording of "Grapevine" in the spring of 1967, but it was not released as a single in favor of the song "Your Unchanging Love" in June 1967. Distraught by his failure to get the song to the public, Whitfield revamped "Grapevine" and recorded it for a third time in the summer of 1967 with Gladys Knight and the Pips. The Gladys Knight version was the first to be released to the public, on 14 September 1967; by December of the same year, this recording had reached the number 2 position on the pop chart and the top slot of the R & B chart. The success of Gaye's "Grapevine" escalated dramatically after the song appeared as filler on his *In the Groove* album, released in August 1968. As Berry Gordy remembers, "The DJs played it so much off the album that we had to release it as a single" (Gordy, *To Be Loved,* 275). This is supported by the 16 November 1968 "Top 10" listing in the *Michigan Chronicle,* which showed Gaye's version at number 3 despite the fact that it would not be released officially as a single until two weeks later.

15. Gaye's first production credit was for Chris Clark's "I Love You," a B-side from 1967 (see appendix 2).

16. Since 1963, Gaye had been married to Berry Gordy's older sister Anna,

but even with his family ties to Gordy, Gaye did not have ready access to the producer's chair at this point in his career. (This date is surmised from Ritz, *Divided Soul*, 82–83.)

17. Ben Edmonds has carefully traced the path Gaye took to the producer's chair beginning in June 1968 (Edmonds, *What's Going On*, 53–75).

18. The August 1968 version of "The Bells" is included in the collection *Motown Sings Motown Treasures*.

19. Quality Control was the formal name for weekly production meetings during which a team of Motown employees voted to determine which singles to release. As Berry Gordy remembers it, "The Friday morning product evaluation meetings were my meetings. They were exciting, the lifeblood of our operation. That was when we picked the records we would release. Careers depended on the choices we made those Friday mornings. Everybody wanted to be there" (Gordy, *To Be Loved*, 151). Edmonds writes that Gordy knew the real production history of these recordings, and, just as he did with his sister Anna, he communicated with Gaye indirectly through Morris (Edmonds, *What's Going On*, 56–57).

20. The reversal of the process was not unheard of at Motown and is reminiscent of the process used by Holland, Dozier, and Holland to write lyrics and melodies during their most creative period.

21. "Baby I'm For Real" was released as an album track in July 1969. However, Edmonds reveals that Motown's original strategy was to release a song called "Green Grows the Lilacs" as the Originals' single from this set. Only after this song failed to achieve success did the company release "Baby, I'm For Real" (Edmonds, *What's Going On*, 68–72). A recording of "Baby, I'm For Real" that allows the listener to separate the lead vocal from the background track appears on the *Motown Classics: Dancing in the Street* karaoke collection.

22. The song "The Bells" that was edited to become "Baby, I'm For Real" should not be confused with the song "The Bells" released as a single in January 1970. These are two different pieces of music in terms of recording history, yet the 1969 version contains many musical similarities to the released version that Gaye produced with Richard Morris: the verse section is in F major and follows the exact harmonic progression of the verse for "The Bells" (1968) and "Baby, I'm For Real." Unlike Gaye's first two versions of "The Bells," this recording was officially released by Motown and entered the charts during winter 1970, peaking at number 12 pop and number 4 R & B.

23. Although different members of the Originals sing lead throughout the song, Freddy Gorman performs lead on the first verse. See Bill Dahl, *Motown the Golden Years* (Iola, WI: Kraus, 2001), 287. This "rhythmic fluidity" is the result of a level of stratification between vocal line and backing track that pervades the music of the Originals just as it does the solo music of Marvin Gaye. It becomes apparent through transcription the ways in which Gaye's writing style often includes hemiola and other types of intricate cross rhythms at both the beat and measure levels and sometimes even across bar lines. The transcription of "Let's Get It On" (example 4.5) offers a good example of this kind of localized rhythmic disjuncture in Gaye's solo work.

24. These two mixes are included on the *What's Going On (Deluxe Edition)*.

25. Zak, *The Poetics of Rock;* Katz, *Capturing Sound;* Walter Everett, *The Beatles as Musicians:* Revolver *through the* Anthology (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Joseph G. Schloss, *Making Beats: The Art of Sample-Based Hip-Hop* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004).

26. Zak, *The Poetics of Rock,* 46.

27. Samuel A. Floyd, *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting Its History from Africa to the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 232. This is one of the main themes of Floyd's study. He writes, "For in Signifyin(g), the emphasis is on the signifier, not the signified. In African-American music, musical figures signify by commenting on other musical figures, on themselves, on performances of other music, on performances of the same piece, and on completely new works of music" (95). He later clarifies that "this is why, in contrast to the European musical orientation, the *how* of a performance is more important than the *what.* Certainly, African Americans have their favorite tunes, but it is what is done with and inside those tunes that the listeners look forward to, not the mere playing of them" (96–97, emphasis in original).

28. Travis Jackson, "What's Going On: Authorship, Accidents, and the Concept Album," paper presented at Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, 25 October 2004.

29. This argument is reflected in the documentary *Standing in the Shadows of Motown* (dir. Paul Justman, Artisan Home Entertainment, 2002), which advocates for greater public recognition of the behind-the-scenes stable of backing musicians at Motown, who nicknamed themselves the Funk Brothers.

30. Gaye's self-production debut, *What's Going On,* was most indebted to the assistance of arranger David van de Pitte; Gaye's major collaborator for both *Let's Get It On* and *Here, My Dear* was songwriter and engineer Ed Townsend; and the disco-infused *I Want You* was the brainchild of Leon Ware. In addition, the Bobby Scott sessions were greatly influenced by engineer Art Stewart, who worked on several other Gaye projects in this decade.

31. One concrete instance of this is Obie Benson's claim concerning Gaye's contribution to "What's Going On." Benson and Al Cleveland wrote the song and brought it to Gaye to record during his self-imposed performing hiatus; Gaye, however, still received partial songwriting credit. Initially, this credit came from Benson himself, who agreed to give Gaye a portion of the royalties for simply recording the piece. Yet, Benson claims that in the end Gaye participated in the compositional process: "He definitely put the finishing touches on it. . . . He added lyrics, and he added some spice to the melody. He fine-tuned the tune, in other words. He added different colors to it. He added some things that were more ghetto, more natural, which made it seem more like a story than a song. He made it visual. He absorbed himself to the extent that when you heard the song you could see the people and feel the hurt and pain. We measured him for the suit and he tailored the hell out of it" (quoted in Edmonds, *What's Going On,* 97–98).

32. Gaye recorded many long-playing records of conservative cabaret material throughout the 1960s, none of which appeared on the album charts. After *The Soulful Moods of Marvin Gaye* (1961), there were the albums *When I'm Alone I Cry* (1964), *Hello Broadway* (1964), and *A Tribute to the Great Nat King Cole* (1965).

33. The modern compilation of performances from these shows, *Marvin Gaye at the Copa,* focuses on the favorable reviews of these concerts, although Gaye himself once confessed that the Copacabana run "didn't go well" (quoted in Ritz, *Divided Soul,* 108). This album was originally scheduled for release in January 1967 but was eventually withdrawn.

34. Gaye stated, "[W]hen Bobby played me his charts, I had to put away my own work. His arrangements were absolute genius. There were four ballads and two jazzy big-band numbers, and never before had I been so excited about music. Strange, though, because when I went in to record, I couldn't pull it off. It was as though the arrangements were too deep for me. Maybe I froze up thinking that the ballads would flop like all the ballads I'd sung before. Later I learned that it wasn't really a block. I couldn't sing the songs because I wasn't old enough. I didn't know enough. I had more suffering to do before I could get to the feelings" (quoted in Ritz, *Divided Soul,* 136). See also David Ritz, liner notes accompanying Marvin Gaye's *Vulnerable.*

35. During this interpretive process, Gaye treated the background tracks much like a jazz performer would use a set of standard chord changes, improvising new melodies, groups of layered vocal parts, and backing vocals that only partially accounted for the original tune. Though similar, this technique should not be equated wholly with the jazz tradition due to the important difference in the method of musical communication that resulted from Gaye improvising over a fixed performance. Whereas jazz improvisation is often based on the communal exchange of ideas between the musical support mechanism and the soloist, Gaye's performances were created against a fixed background, and he therefore could not rely on the backing musicians' reaction to his ideas. Representative studies that discuss the importance of communication and exchange among jazz musicians include Ingrid Monson, *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); and Travis Jackson, "Performance and Musical Meaning: Analyzing 'Jazz' on the New York Scene," PhD diss., Columbia University, 1998.

36. Due to the nature of Gaye's approach to the Scott ballads, exact dates for these sessions are very difficult to determine. It is clear, however, that Gaye began serious work on the ballads during the late 1970s with engineer Art Stewart. When asked about specific dates, Motown archivist Harry Weinger revealed only that "a timeline for what became *Vulnerable* would be a massive research project" (Harry Weinger, e-mail correspondence with the author, 7 June 2006).

37. Three earlier performances of different Scott ballads, which include the original 1960s vocal takes, appear on the album *Romantically Yours.* The 1960s vocals for "I Wish I Didn't Love You So," however, have not been released. Although *Vulnerable* is now out of print, one of the versions included on this album is now available on the album *Love Songs: Bedroom Ballads.* At the present time, based on the released material, it is impossible to know exactly how much of the Scott ballad material exists in the Motown vaults. The various "strains" I will consider represent only those available to the record-buying public.

38. Frank Loesser, *The Frank Loesser Songbook* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 1994), 75–77.

39. I have elected to transcribe the meter as 12/8 in example 4.4, which al-

lows for a 1:1 ratio between the measures of both the original and the Scott arrangement (quarter = dotted quarter).

40. An argument could certainly be made for a voice transfer to complete the octave. Yet, as will become clearer later, these performances are not necessarily wedded to one another, and without both included in the final mix the span of the melody would only reach the interval of a fifth or fourth (depending on which voice was present).

41. This is particularly important in the version of the song on *The Marvin Gaye Collection,* which includes only the higher voice of the duet.

42. Early, *One Nation under a Groove,* 10.

43. Bill Schnee, who mixed *Vulnerable,* says that the final choices for the performances to include on this album were taken from a cassette prepared by Gaye and engineer Art Stewart in the late 1970s. He also confirms that the two strains included in example 4.4 were the only existing interpretive strains on the raw twenty-four-track master tape. Schnee noted, however, that there were multiple performances of each strain. This is apparent in the slight differences between the performances included on the *Vulnerable* and *Marvin Gaye Collection* versions. The most important lesson from the source material is that even though these performances seem extemporaneous Gaye meticulously crafted them. This was so much the case that he was able to reproduce each performance in a nearly identical manner during the recording sessions (Bill Schnee, telephone interview with the author, 1 August 2006).

44. Information about the recording of *Let's Get It On* can be found in the annotations and session research accompanying the *Let's Get It On (Deluxe Edition)* written by Harry Weinger and Andrew Skurow. See also Blair Jackson, "Marvin Gaye's *Let's Get It On,*" *Mix* (1 January 2002), http://mixonline.com/recording/interviews/audio_marvin_gayes_lets/.

45. Basic tracks and demo vocals were recorded the same day for two other songs as well: "If I Should Die Tonight" and "Keep Gettin' It On" (the title track reprise).

46. There is a contrasting bridge (from 1:34) that slows the harmonic motion by resting on the subdominant chord with flatted seventh (A♭7) for two whole measures and then moving through a tonicized V as a retransition to the core progression.

47. See producer Ed Townsend's foreword to the *Let's Get It On (Deluxe Edition).*

48. This particular vocal performance is littered with audible pops and clicks, which provide evidence of the way Gaye pieced it together by "punching in" phrases. The naked vocal track is included on the Singing Machine karaoke disc of *Let's Get It On.*

49. Michael Eric Dyson, *Mercy, Mercy Me: The Art, Loves, and Demons of Marvin Gaye* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2004), 101, 108. The term *hyper-sexualized soul* comes from Mark Anthony Neal, "The Tortured Soul of Marvin Gaye and R. Kelly," in *The Best Music Writing 2004* (New York: Da Capo, 2004), 222–29. We may also view Gaye's sonic acknowledgment of the black body as akin to what Guthrie Ramsey finds in his analysis of the Four Jumps of Jive's "It's Just the Blues" from 1945. Ramsey writes, "If one of the legacies of nineteenth-century

minstrelsy involved the public degradation of the black body in the American entertainment sphere, then one hundred years after minstrelsy's emergence, African Americans used this same signifier to upset a racist social order and to affirm in the public entertainment and the private spheres their culture and humanity." Guthrie P. Ramsey Jr., *Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to Hip-Hop* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 51.

Gaye played a huge role in the transformation of the coded hokum blues of the 1940s and 1950s to the explicit, overtly romanticized rhythm and blues of the 1970s and 1980s. He was a leading force in this movement, which also included contemporaries such as Al Green, Isaac Hayes, and Barry White and followers such as Teddy Pendergrass, Keith Sweat, and R. Kelly. See Orea Jones, "The Theology of Sexual Healing," in *Black Sacred Music: A Journal of TheoMusicology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), 68–74.

50. Quoted in Ritz, *Divided Soul,* 178.

51. Gaye's unofficial last Motown album was the unfinished *In Our Lifetime,* which was (as discussed earlier) released without his approval.

52. The studio was closed for years after Gaye's financial troubles in the late 1970s, but it has since been reopened under the name Marvin's Room.

53. Unlike the previous examples in this chapter, Gaye actually used different takes (performances) of the original template in this case. Another example from *Here, My Dear* that uses this sort of cut-and-paste technique to create a song is "Funky Space Reincarnation" (working title "Song #2 [Breakdown]"), which grew out of a breakdown section of "Anger" (working title "Song #2").

54. The connection between these songs is evident in their working titles, "I Got Love" ("Everybody Needs Love") and "I Got Love II" ("Here, My Dear").

55. See Ritz, *Divided Soul,* 233–38. Although it is not certain when this agreement took place, it is more than likely the case that Gaye was already at work on what would become *Here, My Dear* when he learned of this financial arrangement. According to Weinger, Gaye began work on these sessions as early as April 1976.

56. Ritz, *Divided Soul,* 234.

57. The bass and drum set parts are shown in example 4.6 as in "Here, My Dear." There are slight differences in both parts in "Everybody Needs Love" (e.g., in the second half of measure four, the bass guitar in "Here, My Dear" plays B♭–A♮–A♭ as shown, while in the corresponding place in "Everybody Needs Love," the bass guitar plays the pitches C–B♭–A♭ in tandem with the backing bass vocal part). The differences in the backing tracks for "Here, My Dear" and "Everybody Needs Love" do not necessarily preclude them from having used the same multitrack master. Nevertheless, their tempi are markedly different and there is no noticeable difference in pitch. I would guess that the two tracks are from different takes of the same tracking session or different sections of a larger jam used to produce the master background after editing.

58. The bass guitar is muted from the mix during this segment, and as it fades in the vocal bass actually disappears.

59. Gaye was murdered by his father in Los Angeles on 1 April 1984, the day before his forty-fifth birthday.

60. Gaye had a strong connection to the doo-wop style of the 1950s. After

dropping out of high school and a brief stint in the Air Force, he moved to Chicago in 1959 to perform in the doo-wop group Harvey and the Moonglows. The Moonglows had formed in the early 1950s in Cleveland and, after signing with Chess records in the mid-1950s, the group scored several hits between 1955 and 1958 with songs such as "Sincerely," "Most Of All," "We Go Together," "When I'm With You," "Please Send Me Someone To Love," and "Ten Commandments Of Love." (Although Harvey Fuqua was the main songwriter and head of the group, Bobby Lester often sang lead.) When Gaye joined the group, the original members had recently disbanded, leaving only Harvey Fuqua to carry on as leader. Gaye only sang lead on one single—"Mama Loochie"—for the newly formed Harvey and the Moonglows. This new configuration was not very successful, and Fuqua moved to Detroit in 1960. There he founded several small record labels—including Harvey Records and Tri-Phi—to which he signed the young Gaye (although no Gaye records were ever released under these labels). Fuqua's most notable involvement with the Gordy family at this time was with sister Gwen Gordy (Berry's older sister), who became his business partner and love interest. Later that year Berry Gordy bought the entire Harvey Records roster, effectively adding Gaye to the growing stable of young artists that would eventually record for the Motown Corporation's group of labels.

61. David Ritz, e-mail communication with the author, 8 June 2006. In this communication Ritz also confirmed that the process used to create "Sexual Healing" (which he cowrote with Gaye) began with a completed set of backing tracks with chord changes, after which Ritz wrote a set of lyrics and Gaye used these words (altering them slightly) to write the melody of the song. Ritz is an acknowledged expert on the day-to-day lives and working methods of a variety of rhythm and blues artists. He has written collaborative autobiographies with Ray Charles, Smokey Robinson, Etta James, B. B. King, Aretha Franklin, and the Neville Brothers and written songs with Gaye, Janet Jackson, and Cyril Neville.